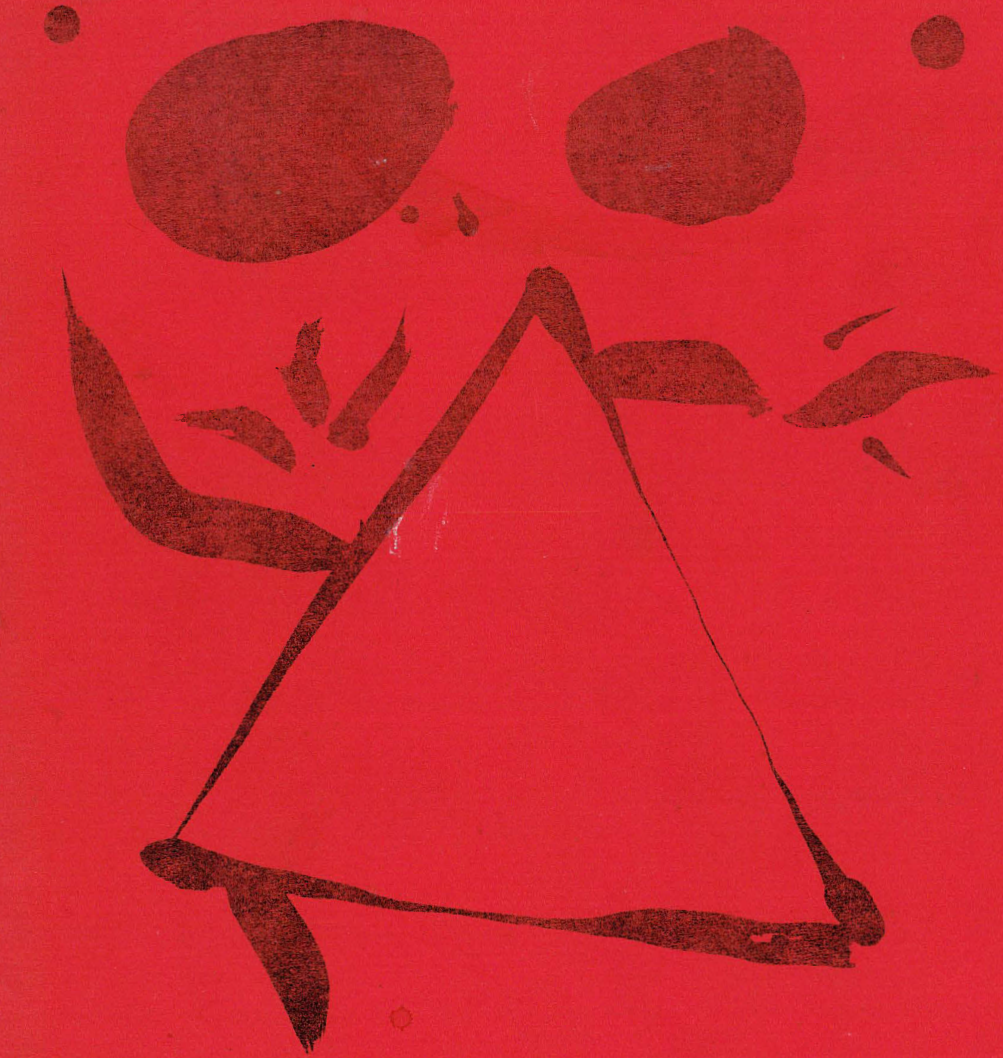
RED AND BLACK

No 23 WINTER 1993



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RED & BLACK

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anarchist journal

No 23 Winter 1993

contents

The New Order and Communism.....p.3

New Political Context
by W. Bradley.....p.6

Teaching and "Nonstandard" Writer
by R. Kostelanetz.....p.10

Dissent and the Environment: A Defence of Critique within Social Movement
by Dr. T. Doyle.....p.18

Why Kropotkin Advised Radcliffe-Brown As He Did
by K. Maddock.....p.41

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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The contents of this issue of RED and BLACK may seem unusual to regular readers. Instead of articles dealing exclusively with anarchist history and perspectives we have included several contributions which broadly speaking can be called "libertarian" or "non-conformist" perspectives on contemporary society.

Readers' responses to this broader orientation are welcomed - whether negative or positive. Contributions are also welcomed: be they article length, shorter items, comments, news, letters etc.

The New Order & Communism

Communism is bankrupt. Its bankruptcy has invigorated and made liberal democracy arrogant. The latter claims to have not only a catholic application but also to be the only one virtuous politico-social order that suits human nature. Here and now, and in the final analyses, it is the realization of the capitalist millennium as expressed in the New Order. But since beauty is in the eye of the believer, for the atheist, the New Order is more dust in the eyes of the people. It is a religious mercantalism whose sacred ground is power and profit. It is accompanied by human tragedies and slaughter of the innocents as necessary components for its triumph. After all, like all churches, the new church of the Allmighty Dollar needs the blood of the lambs. Its health thrives on objectified and reified human commodities, exchangable and disposable, and in breaking any individual authenticity.

The human being, reduced to a tool of his master and seduced by the latter's power, is immersed in emotional and intellectual putrefaction. In such a state of immiseration anyone will welcome the latest capitalist metamorphosis, the New Order and its military orgasms as a reign of peace. In fact the reign of the market, that is destroying the social fabric of the North itself, impoverishing the South, sanitising social consciousness and promulgating capitalist barbarism. In this New Order freedom is celebrated as solidarity between have and have not, workers and bosses, exploited and exploiters, little functionaries and boards of directors and is fuelled by moralizing rubbish of bosses, churches, parties, union bureaucrats and professional moralists.

The New Order is an expression of the new class of exploiters and in business there is no sentimentality. The exploiters find their significance in the development of misery and in the establishment, in all domains, of existential pauperism, so that they can shine as a master race. As far as the people are subservient to and recognize the virtue of the New Order with its World Bank and the I.M.F. they are free to act within certain permitted perimeters and are allowed the freedom of indulging in dreams and fantasies, self-flagellation and various rituals of self-effacement. Thus the system that claims to fit best human nature is an oppressive machinery within which the voiceless people function. Like the New Order of Hitler, the New Order of the Industrial North is not to establish centuries of lasting peace, but centuries of domination of the North and dependency and inferiority of the South.

The New Order, like Nazism, is a cancer of humanity that paralyses human faculties and prevents people from thinking clearly and rationally; from analysing facts and events objectively rather than as instrumental to domination and established rules and rulers. Instead of seeing the charitable carrot offered by the North and I.M.F. as a carrot, as an enticement to divert them from the reality of their suffering, the starved greet it as a symbol of plenty, of a promissed land and happiness. Instead of seeing the multinationals and the World Bank for what they are, they are hailed as saviours. The World Bank and the powerful nations act "charitably" only after fleecing populations and sending them to the wall. But their humanitarianism is the militarisation of society and the establishment of their order, whose finalities are power and profit.

But communism? Was not communism the materialization of the proletarian millennium, the classless society? Unfortunately not! Classless society remained an ideological construct while the communist praxis was terror, slavery and red fascism. In the logic of such a system the proletariat and people in general were economically enslaved, politically oppressed and socially militarized, while intellectually dependent on Marxism-Leninism, the official dogma, the guiding principle and moral tenet of socialist realism. While the revolutionary masses abolished the old slavery the socialist avant garde established its own power and preserved all bourgeois imageries: gods of the heaven settled instead in the Kremlin;, socialism turned into the ritualistic manifestation of the Communist State; the Party turned into the sacred body of the proletariat, while the masses were progressively reduced to abject poverty and servile conditions. Communism, the avant garde cannibalistic act lubricated by the proletariat, was just a mystification of the socialist intelligentsia in power.

The collective consciousness of the proletariat - the tool of the classless society, of the new social model of equality and revolution - was turned, by a communist surgical operation, into a weapon of the destruction of the proletariat as a historical and conscious movement and, by extension, of the people as authors of their well being and independence. The proletariat incorporated in the State and absorbed by the Party, became a tool of the reaction. In theory collective consciousness remained a reference point; in social reality it was a weapon of oppression in the service of despotic avant garde, the proletarian elite, to safeguard its entrenched and dominant interest. The historical mission of the proletariat was turned into a charade wherein the proletariat witnessed its own enslavement and glorified it as a progressive achievement. Its oppression was seen as an enlightened vision whilst the firing squads were regarded as benefactors. There was nothing more cynical than this debasement of the working class.

The workers, as a result of being educated by the guardians of the High-Marxist-Leninist Church, acquired the communist morality and thus venerated the sacred communist hierarchy which they obeyed and served with self-abnegation. The proletariat, as a class, become a puppet in the hands of the Party and a cog in the machine that destroyed its intellectual, ethical and revolutionary being and any revolutionary vision.

Alienated, turned into a tool of its own oppression, subservient to its own masters, obeying hierarchies and lacking a radical social critique, the proletariat, became committed not to its own revolutionary perspectives but to those of iis leaders, the makers of history. They also succumbed to the new idols, new saints, new religions: nationalism, ethnic cleansing, hate of minorities and others evoked by its new rulers, old elites in new attires. It experiences the onslaught of the New Order as a liberatory praxis, a catharsis of its frustration while the spectacle of decapitating fellow workers is seen as a heroic gesture, a conscientious act of its human contribution to its own inhumanity. "The proletarian coercion that goes from summury executions to forced labour, paradoxically as it may appear to be, is the method of transforming the human material of the capitalist epoch into communist humanity." But this "communist humanity" of Bukharin, that sprung from a fornication between Marxism and the State and from the illicit love between socialism and capitalism, has bred the new communist person who reproducing the capital and capitalist relationships, lacking his own physionomy and consciousness has been psychologically prepared to embrace the New Order which promisses heaven and honey but overlooks the rocks and the chains. Born in illusion, living in illusion it is logically to end in illusion: the negation of the negation.

New Political Context

W. Bradley

While a common political consciousness (coherent set of values, sense of justness, etc) is not voluntarily sharable beyond a communal scale, a general political context is capable of underpinning broad association. A critical embrace of a new, common political context seems necessary to replace power politics with a more social and ecolo approach.

Marxism, practiced as authoritarian socialism, is discredited.

Greens decry violence, hierarchy and centralization in virtually every circumstance except via the offices of government to which they hope to be elected.

Pacifism centers on an idealistic, individual moralism that tends to ignore materialities. For example, if it can be imagined that slavery was defeated by a mere change in attitude (abolitionist persuasion), the convenient power shift from chattel slavery to wage slavery will be missed (escape analysis as a progressive need of industrial capitalism). With "slavery" dead, how does one understand the current labour of women in many third world countries where they do 75% of the work, get only 10% of the income and are granted only 1% of the property?

The peace and justice movement has not been very successful in its eclectic approach, hoping various activist groups will "cross pollinate in a multifaceted push toward social justice."

Activists complain about the inability of the dominant value consciousness to critique exploitation, oppression and injustice, but they don't seem able to get to the root which is the power-centeredness of the current political consciousness (liberalism) and the way it is conferred. Social/ecological activism remains largely factional: not directed toward systemic change.

Can racism be adequately confronted under liberalism? Its civil rights remedy largely ignores how legal equality does not address social inequality. Uniform treatment of individuals does not mean equal access, distribution and enrichment. It is not the lack of equal treatment that is so destructive socially: it is the power of privilege to set the standards as truths (beyond politics).

Judgements can be "objective" and according to "impersonal" rules, yet find an entire race naturally belongs in a lesser social place.

Can sexism be rooted out? Try to empirically show that women are oppressed. The liberal consciousness will hold that women naturally belong where they are socially placed: by nature, not domination. Unequal pay is "merited" according to uniformly applied impersonal standards--each has been "treated equally." It takes consciousness-raising to make the privileged male standpoint visible. It cannot be done empirically. Existing male privilege can not be seen as unfair when the meaning of fairness is set by males according to the way things are.

Liberalism's founders intended to institutionalize social power, and were confident that disapproval (even from the majority) could be controlled by factionalizing it (see Federalist No 10). Such calculated social power requires social inequality--some form of legitimated privilege by race, sex, property, authoritative office, etc.

How can the consciousness-conferring power of liberalism with its institutionalized privilege be overcome? How will complementarity gain a foothold within a morality that presumes people are inherently disposed to seek gains over others and nature? Now can local ecological considerations and valuing be realized when liberal government is legally conceived to transcend community as mere factional valuing always secondary to its central needs?

Liberalism denies that voluntary value sharing can generate a peaceful diversity of authentic (politically sufficient) communities. It equates community based politics with social chaos (pejoratively labeled as anarchy or tribalism). Accordingly, liberalism (whose extensive governments are now worldwide) precludes the real social freedom of undominated choice in political structure. It is not possible to leave one liberal hegemony and enjoy essential access without joining another.

Conceptions of justice, common moral ground and fundamental values vary with each communal consciousness. Currently "communities" are behaving as if their particular value agenda should be actualized universally by dint of political power. That is the only politics they know. But communities as interest groups can never get beyond the liberal poltical context. How, for example, can the "just cause" of pacifism take hold in a mentality that finds the invasion of Panama acceptable as Operation Just Cause?

All values, even those that become sharable as a general political context, are "socia creations. They originate as local and situated political choices. Every society is held together by a prevailing consciousness that determines meaning and appropriateness. But forms of consciousness can be voluntary or conferred involuntarily.

Liberalism began as a particular political consciousness. Its initial support came mainly from its liberalization of individual valuing (as does its name). It became a dominant political context through the legitimacy-conferring power of its institutional controls. Thus, "liberating" liberalism ultimately failed essential political freedom by keeping counter valuing systemically ineffective (factional).

An authentic bioregional or ethnic political consciousness cannot realize its popularly innovated values through larger liberalism. Values lose their integrity when abstracted into universal liberalism. Once filtered through the dominant political consciousness, values acquire a spin that makes intractable that whole genre of problems whose political kernel is power itself.

Voluntary community, situated in the particulars of local ecological conditions and valuing, could reverse the destructiveness of power by debasing it. Currently, it is community that is being debased; surviving as scarcely more than a special purpose collective (e.g.the insurance "community") completely circumscribed by power politics.

Community-building (the process of arriving at authentically shared values) needs greater freedom to be a complete process. There is no single set of coherent social values that "should" be actualized. Each communal value consciousness can make only local, situated claims of truth. If communities existed in a political context of social freedom, they could associate as needed and desired, out of agreement and interest.

To its credit, liberalism does not claim to have a corner on social truth. It acknowledges that the particular valuations behind its various structures are artificially chosen for order's sake: "necessary" for effecting a higher will to manage away the chaos of "inherently" selfish humans competing under "natural" scarcity. Understanding social values as open political choices did effectively end the political idea of a universally predetermined common good. Thus liberalism made possible a new vision of social freedom--one that now threatens to supersede it.

Even though liberalism denies any absolute values exist to underpin its judgments, it nevertheless stays authoritative by implementing values as if they were objective universals. But, its valuations are falsely universal--ultimately need violent enforcement. Also, because liberal values can only be subjective choices, they will advantage some over others. Imposing a favoring higher will's universal frameworks upon our diverse social and natural environments is intolerable to those who understand ecology as the complementarity of undominated natures.

A broader understanding of the human gift of sociability allows contemplation of politics simply as "a getting together to conduct social affairs." Politics doesn't have to be a process for universalizing truths (as in religious fundamentalism) or effecting factitious controls (as in liberal order).

The emerging political consciousness views prepackaged values as dominating. Who can say, what particular social forms (actualized value structures) would result given a political context of social freedom (undominated choice of political structure). The expectation would be a diversity of politically sufficient, peaceful ecocommunities, each a partial expression of human nature contributing reciprocally to a general good. Note, the reciprocal context of undominated choice prevents one group from freely choosing to dominate another. It also prevents the social constructions of legitimized prescription from being rationalized as consent.

Liberalism was not established by an overpowering of subjects, but through the consciousness-conferring power of legitimated controls. Accordingly, new forms of consciousness will be needed to replace it. This means developing a new political context that is open to politically sufficient, voluntary community.

Most of today's social/ecological activists can agree on a political context of: Domination destroys (does violence to every living nature by preventing it from being its complete and authentic self) and community builds (because ecology is the complementarity of undominated natures). The new awareness entertains the possibilities of a diverse but complementary social fabric impossible under liberalism. Assumptions about a nasty and brutish human nature and a natural scarcity that makes the power politics of liberalism seem necessary are passe.

Open choice of social structure with equal access, distribution and enrichment (authentic community) appears to be the only undiscredited political approach left to us.

FOOTNOTE:

The above contrasting of political contexts is elaborated in my recent book "The New Political Consciousness: A Context for Ecocommunity" by Lysander Spooner Publishing, Box 76, Shingletown, Ca 96088.

Teaching & The "Nonstandard" Writer

R. Kostelanetz

> People talk about criminals being the results of their environment, but they seldom speak about artists being victims of their environment, though in fact they are.
> Philip Glass, Music by Philip Glass (1987)

University teaching is, for better as well as worse, what most American literary writers do for a living nowadays, and this fact makes our literary culture, as well as the preconditions of our literary production, different from everywhere else in the world (to a degree that few dare discuss). Teaching can provide a good living if you can get a professorship and tenure, but only a marginal living if you cannot. Determined from the beginning to be a full-time writer (in part because such professional heroes as Edmund Wilson and Ezra Pound were), I've almost entirely avoided teaching; but after living marginally for over two decades now, I have a need to consider it.

People who have regular paychecks tell me that they are very much worth having; I wouldn't know. When the twenty-fifth reunion committee of my college class asked for a superlative that would characterize my life, I replied, "longest unemployed--24 2/3rds years." One truth I do know was articulated by Delmore Schwartz, in a 1954 letter to Karl Shapiro: "The trouble with everything but teaching is that one spends so much time thinking of making money... that one is more distracted than ever." By this time my principal administrative/financial skill is running a low budget business that is me, which is to say that I'm the boss who also sweeps the place. Though there is, thankfully, neither a family nor a car to support, I do waste too much time thinking about making money.

Having learned to live on little income, I find myself envying less the money than certain perks that most academ-

ics take for granted--comprehensive health insurance, long-distance telephoning, free photocopying and typing, factotums who collect mail and messages during peronal absences, travel reimbursements, the power to dispense beneficence to people (especially fellow academics) who would then be predisposed to grant favours in return, and a circumscribed hierarchy of bosses. Academics have no idea of what it is like to work for a large number of benefactors, most of whom would like you to believe that your relationship with them can affect your career and livelihood (over two dozen for me last year, none of them providing more than 10 percent of my income)--there is a level of vulnerability and struggle that, if mastered, can make other kinds of survival, and negotiation, child's play.

Remembering Milton Friedman's dictum about the nonexistence of a free lunch, I'm sure that a teaching position extracts a price, not only in time available for one's own work but in less obvious effects. I know well the psychological costs of independence, having lived that life. As you confront the world with much less money than people of similar age and education, you are likely to avoid social situations that you cannot afford; you dress badly, not only because you cannot afford to dress well but because you don't want anyone to think you can.

More seriously, you meet the world without any tag attached to your name, which means people whose own professional lives depend upon titles are likely to think you suspect, if they acknowledge you at all. (I'm reluctant to write references for others for academic positions, because I fear that on universty hiring committees only the letterhead is read; I have none.) Worse, if people don't know what you've done from your name alone, you sometimes have reason to remind them, meanwhile falling into the uncomfortable posture of unnecessary boastfulness. (As Kenneth Rexroth and Robert Duncan, for two examples, were unable to identify themselves as professor of English, both wasted a lot of energy and no doubt time demonstrating that they knew as much literature as any professor of English.)

As you get paid mostly in small checks, you work like a cab driver, always looking for ways to pick up an extra nickel or dime. You waste a lot of energy and attention trying to find an edge in your dealings with paying customers or, simply, another fare, which is to say an opportunity that did not exist before. Grub Street means grubbing, often to the embarrassment not only of one's better-heeled associates but to yourself. Whereas professors think like other salaried employees, independent writers and artists tend to think like small businessmen, petit bourgeois,

which, you can't forget, is what in fact they are.

Since creative academics I know are reluctant to discuss what effects teaching might have upon their own psyches, I have made a few observations of my own. One peril endemic to academic artists, to be frank, is expecting that the respect they receive at home should necessarily be extended to the larger world; so that the more success that middling artists have on their own campuses, in terms of rank promotions and accompanying emoluments, the greater their frustrations and thus their alienation from a professional world outside the academy. That accounts for their tendency to let their cultural presence depend upon their position and their license-credentials, rather than knowledge or achievements. Second, since their salaries are guaranteed, academics get as hysterical about losing perks as independents do about being short-changed. Third, if you spend much of your life talking to people who don't know much, over whose fortunes you have some authority, you come to think you can get away with a lot of cultural garbage. At a recent professional conference dominated by academics, I heard ignorance and fakery that would be unacceptable among professionals who had to worry about the deleterious effects of seeming foolish. Reminded of George Orwell's dictum about only intellectuals believing certain nonsense, I thought that only tenured professors could think they could get away with so much intellectual flaccidity. Another indulgence available to academics is far more arrogance and nastiness in dealing with their professional colleagues, simply because, thanks to tenure, academia rivals the U.S. Post office as the last refuges for the sorts of "difficult personality" that could not possibly survive unaffiliated. Independents and academics tend to regard each other as suspect, professors thinking the untitled are academically unqualified, independents thinking that academics are the second-raters who could not survive, either economically or psychologically, without such a job. (And neither is entirely wrong.)

Perhaps because the worlds are so different, it seems that few middle-aged independents make the transition into the academy without incurring serious loss that is reflected in their work. The examples most vividly in my mind are the filmmaker Stan VanDerBeek and the poet Galway Kinnell, both of whom did masterpieces before entering the academy and nothing remotely comparable afterwards. (Indeed, I've also noticed that, even if they can compensate for financial losses, few have gone from academia to inedpendence without similar loss of quality. It would seem, in general, that once you commit yourself to one ship or the other, it would be wise not to jump.)

Another reason for my reluctance to teach writing is that my own recollection of creative writing courses is not favorable. At the Ivy League college I attended, one guy taught only what he did, with reference only to select enthusiasms for work similar to his own, scarcely caring about other kinds of writing, in part because, as he regularly told his writing colleagues, he "hated teaching, every minute of it." Another, whom I remember as pompously unhelpful, recently published a memoir, in which he speaks proudly of other writers he invited to teach at this university. However, since he makes no mention of any students, past or present--none at all--he raises the question, since these guys eventually took a million dollars apiece from this university, of who is paying whom for what? My suspicion, now that I've been around longer, is that these two professors regarded the literary world as a highly competitive place, which indeed it is, and thus thought it would be "smart" for them not to prepare anyone to advance in the competition. That perhaps accounts for why of the dozen or so college contemporaries of mine who became visible writers, none, as far as I can tell, majored in creative writing! (Many of the writing majors became, as far as I can tell, high school teachers, which, if you think about it, is what the program best prepared them to be.)

I had the good fortune of having another writing teacher, S. Foster Damon, a poet better known for his pioneering scholarship on William Blake. In regular dinners, in addition to courses, Damon taught me, simply, not "how to write" (or how he wrote) but how to be a writer, which is to say how to do one's own work. Thanks to my contact with him, I've always thought, works of mine began to appear in print soon after my graduation from college.

II

> Universities in a democracy must remain universities, and that means academic, freedom the unrestricted pursuit of indiscovered truth, and not the repeating of the truths that the different pressure groups in society think they already have. All pressure groups in society are anti-educational, no matter what they are pressing for.
>
> Northrop Frye, "The Writer and the University" (1957)

My hesitancy over university teaching also comes from the sense that, in the recent explosion of the creative writing biz, I don't fit. I don't have an M.F.A., which seems to be required of newcomers now, and I didn't arrive in academia early enough to get tenure in a department

that could then "lend" me to a creative writing program. Whereas most writing programs nowadays are divided into poetry and fiction (and would prefer that professors hired by them be distinguished in only one or the other), I have published poetry, fiction, and experimental prose, in addition to criticism and journalism, and then done some word-based visual art, music, and holography that has won some recognition. Also even the poetry and fiction I do is so different from common M.F.A. produce that, to my count, nobody committed to doing similarly innovative work teaches writing in American universities--no one.

My own reason for not teaching poetry writing or fiction writing is based upon a professional rule I've evolved over the years as an independent writer: Never do anything, even the smallest thing, that someone else could do better. This rule was designed to keep me honest, as insurance against receiving any spoils or privilege that might cause inferior work; it also deflects resentment over unwarranted rewards. Not only could many others teach just poetry and just fiction better than I, but one sure way not to write like everyone else is not to teach what others teach. Since that first principle is important to me, I would rather not have cause to compromise it. So the two times I have been asked to teach, initially for a week-long conference at Indiana University in July 1976 and then for a semester at the University of Texas at Austin (accounting for that aberrant one-third year), I agreed only on the condition that my course be called "Experimental Writing."

At Indiana, that title appeared in a program that otherwise included the standard fare of fiction, poetry, nonfiction, and drama. While the other workshops in the summer session were filled to the brim with twenty students each, mine had only seven customers, which meant that it did not pay for itself (and was not renewed). After a week of daily meetings with our classes, the faculty gathered to share experiences. All the other instructors commented, as I remember them, that none of their students did publishable work--absolutely none; my response was that three of mine would be publishing (and are still publishing, over a decade later). One of the other instructors replied, after shock passed from his face, "With a course title like yours, Richard, you're going to get only the best students." I should add that many years later I was once approached about heading a similar summer conference at a school customarily regarded as "progressive." The key question in the preliminary telephone discussion was which celebrities I could get to visit the conference cheap. I withdrew, not wishing to exploit my friends in that way. The only business I ever want to run is my own, thanks; university teaching should be about something else.

At the University of Texas, my sponsor was not the Department of English or Creative Writing but "American Studies." As we had seventeen weeks, I opened the course by showing my own work, as well as my more adventurous anthologies, partly to introduce my esthetics to an unfamiliar audience. The requirement for the course, I told them, was to produce something "radically unlike anything any of us has ever seen before, with some reference to literature." At the time I remember seeing dejected expressions, as a few students realized that they could not submit manuscripts already in progress. I added, "I'm not sure I can evaluate the quality of what you do, but I can judge effort." (Actually, I wanted them to evaluate one another's performance at the end, as it was fairly obvious to everyone concerned how much effort each student had expended; but my chairman discouraged that.) What came from this provocative assignment was a variety of works, some of them in media other than typed pages. Two students in particular took off, writing fictions whose sentences did not relate to one another, each trying to outdo the other in approaching abstractness (and both of them have since published both fiction and criticism). At our last class, I said, "Whether or not you continue working as you have done here is your business, but I think all of you have done something you did not think you would or could do when you began this course. For that alone, it has been a success." Nonetheless, "experimental writing" has not been given again, at least by me.

III

> He who can does. He who cannot, teaches.
>
> George Bernard Shaw, Maxims for Revolutionists (1903)

Now that I've reached mid-career, with greater visible recognition in the face of declining income, there is cause for me to think again about university teaching. Though I earned two decades ago an "advanced" degree in American history, I could not possibly teach it now (and would not want to, given my rule about not doing what others could do better). Like all independent writers, I've known what I've written about; but having already put it into print, I would be reluctant to repeat it aloud. (Conversely, when I was recently asked to revise my M.A. thesis for book publication I found myself unable to revise as much as I planned, because, unlike an academic, I have had no occasion to teach the material in the intervening twenty-five years.) I suppose I could base a course upon one or another work in progress, but am unsure about the value of that, or in what academic context it would fit. (One scholarly

course I'd like to teach, if only as an experiment, would deal with my own work; but how could this be titled without causing offense?)

A few years ago I heard about a position that was conceptually attractive: running a criticism program in an arts college, if only because I could thus expand it to include imaginative writing that resembles contemporary art (rather than "poetry" and "fiction"), as well as writing directly for media such as video and holography and, finally, the Write of Arting, or expositions of one's purposes as an artist, all of which interest me. However, this criticism position was designed by the college's painting professors to reward a critic who had written about them, wishing to use local power for larger worldly ends (a sin stemming from the frustrations mentioned before). Once the favored critic was elected, the administration intervened, cancelling the position (that still doesn't exist at this college).

Recently encouraged to think again about teaching, this time at a small liberal arts college with a "progressive" reputation (and no current "creative writing" program to defend, thankfully), I proposed the following courses, not because they are already given, but because they aren't, at least not in any place known to me:

(1) A year-long workshop in the production of a book, which would include not only the writing (or equivalent production) of a book-length manuscript but the necessary follow-up of copy-editing, design, and production, by any means available, of a camera-ready dummy. Since I believe that, once you think in terms of doing a book, certain problems are common, this course would be open to those wishing to produce book-length manuscripts of poetry as well as fiction, visual books (of photographs, say, or related drawings) as well as exposition. Participants would be required to make copies of works in progress available to one another for criticism and comment throughout the course of the year. (now that I've produced some books myself, I wish I'd taken such a course as an indegraduate.)

(2)A yearlong workshop in the production of major art projects, open to practitioners of all arts, where the requirement is simply the creation from scratch of major work, representing the sum of all the student has learned, plus intensive labor. The emphasis would be on learning how to think like a professional artist, rather than mastering the mechanics of a discipline. I believe that though the techniques of the various arts may differ, the production of it involves common problems and that working alongside people in arts other than your own has two advantages--an increase in general intelligence about art and a de-

crease in feelings of specific competition. As I had never regarded my activity as existing in a universe of limited success, there is space for others and opportunities to share.

(3). A one-semester workshop in experimental art, where the requirement is simply to create something radically unlike anything seen before, likewise open to aspirants in all arts. This course, whose theme is stretching the imagination, would best be given in the fall semester.

(4) A one-semester workshop in the writing of arts criticism, with an emphasis upon writing and thus open to critical aspirants in every art. (Once you know your art, I find, the problems of writing criticism of any length and focus are fairly similar.) This course, which would consist of exercises with various forms, would best be given in the spring.

(5) A one-semester seminar in the Write of Arting, open to practitioners of all arts, requiring self-definition through the writing of manifestos, program notes, autobiographical summaries, proposals, etc.

Even though this last university position may not come to me, the idea of it has given me the opportunity to imagine "nonstandard" writing courses that might be unique to me and perhaps valuable to others. If it is indeed offered to me, may I please, Lord God, have enough self-consciousness to avoid those predicaments that, from the outside, I have come to associate with other literary professors (and perhaps enough courage to record sometime in print how others will come to regard me differently once I have a tag after my name!)

*****

Richard Kostelanetz's latest books are American Writing Today (Whitston, 1981), On Innovative Art(ist)s (McFarland, 1992), Wordworks: Poems Selected and New (Boa, 1992), Merce Cunningham (A Capella, 1992), Writings About John Cage (Univ. of Michigan, 1993). He is currently completing A Dictionary of the Avant-Gardes.

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'Dissent and the Environment: A Defence of Critique within Social Movements'.

Dr. T. Doyle

Introduction

> Critics who look for a home in (or near) political parties and movements escape the segregation and surrender the protection; they come closer to newness than do their academic fellows; it is harder to find precedents for their experience. But they are hardly aliens in their new environment. Parties and movements are the creations of people very much like themselves. Insofar as they remain critics, critical now of their new comrades, they are not so much alienated as uneasily integrated; their relation to party officials is something like that of medieval religious radicals to the ecclesiastical authorities (Walzer, M., 1988: 8).

The discussion of the role of the intellectual in social movements is rather controversial. Traditionally, the intellectual has been seen as separate to any kind of *real* social activity. As a consequence, scholars leave the boundaries of the University and enter into what is popularly perceived as *The Real World*. This socio/architectural chasm between the University and the rest of the world is founded on a widely-accepted and deep-seated notion of *duality* within Western societies, separating the mind from the body.

Due to the fact that the mind and the body have been separated; so too has theory been separated from practice. After this separation, there have been countless debates as to which comes first: theory or practice, ideology or structure. The instrumentalists argue that theory must precede practice; and the determinists argue from the opposite perspective (Doyle 1992a). Once the separation between mind and body is denied, however, then this rather boring 'chicken and egg' argument ceases to be a problem. The fact is that the two are intermeshed (given a multi-directional view of history). Both practice and theory interact on a constant basis, with times when one achieves dominance (in the movement's perceived importance) over the other (Doyle 1992a). Really good theories emerge from the activities of the movement and vice versa. With the abolition of the separation between mind and body, the intellectual can come down from the citadels of learning into the polis, and members of the polis will have access to a new community resource: the University.

In a discussion of the relationship between theory and practice in the women's movement, Catharine MacKinnon argues for far closer connections between theory and practice. She writes:

> To write the theory of this practice is not to work through logical puzzles or entertaining conundra, not to fantasize utopias, not to tell people what to do. It is not to exercise authority; it does not lead practice. Its task is to engage life through developing mechanisms that identify and criticize rather than reproduce social practices of sub-ordination and to make tools of women's consciousness and resistance that further a practical struggle to end equality. This kind of theory requires humility and it requires participation (MacKinnon, C., 1991: 14).

There have been some attempts within the history of the environment movement to overcome the duality of mind and body. As an organiser of the first Ecopolitics Conference in Brisbane, Queensland, 1986, one of the primary functions of the event was to break down the perceived nexus between *intellectuals* and *activists*. Despite some successes, these objectives never achieved their full potential. On the final night of the conference dinner, after some days mixing, the division was never more apparent, with the split actually manifesting itself in physical form; activists on one table, academics on the other.

This split has continued in the environment movement to this present day. Brian Martin writes:

> Over the years I have known quite a number of dedicated social activists. One thing that has amazed me about many of them is how little attention they seem to pay to social theory (Martin, B., 1990: 3).

Equally bad anecdotes can be told about the social theoreticians who wish to maintain 'their objectivity' at all costs. Often this removal from the 'popular debate' is an attempt by the theoretician to consolidate his/her own power. Chris Rootes states:

> Not surprisingly, activists often suspect that theorists have created theoretical knowledge partly or wholly in order to bolster their own claims to power (Rootes, C., 1990: 6).

This rather abitrary separation of mind and body; theory and practice has, in part, produced another ill-effect. Critique of society is only seen as the exclusive domain of the theoretician, without a grasp of the *reality* of action. As a consequence, critique is not often viewed kindly by many movement activists as it is seen to emanate from quarters which are removed, foreign and *safe* from the fray.

This dominant notion must be overcome, for critique and dissent within social movements are essential. Indeed they are defining characteristics which separate social movement forms from other more formalised human collectives. To criticise, to dissent, is to *question*. Questioning within social movements facilitates change. Surely humanity has not worked out all the ways in which an *environmental crisis/es* can be averted. Surely the magnitude of the crisis/es is not even known. Surely, and most importantly, the parameters of the symbol *Environment* are not even known yet: that is to say that the very meaning of the word *Environment* is still being defined. These answers cannot be found without continual questioning and continual change. Even some government officials recognise this point; regardless of whether or not their policies are friendly to this idea. John Dawkins, past Minister for Employment Education and Training, contends:

> The whole idea of academic freedom is that universities are free to criticise, to challenge, to inspire society, and regrettably too few of them do it (Dawkins quoted by Trinca, 1992: 35).

There must be a role for critique within all *living* social movements. Without dissent, social movements cease to exist, and become formal organisations. Their revolutionary aims are lost, and only the reformists remain. This paper concentrates on the environment movement in Australia. Large portions of the mass movement are dominated by a small network of professional bureaucrats who have established a powerful sub-culture which does not tolerate critique or dissent of its practices. The strange paradox is that the organised movement sees itself as questioning dominant *developmental* practices, but will not tolerate dissent within its own ranks.

This paper aims to explain why this is so, and seeks to elucidate the types of arguments used by the professional bureaucrats to denigrate movement critics and the content of their work. Finally, it argues the case for increased tolerance of critique within the environment movement.

General Arguments Against Critique

There have been several common threads in much of the correspondence which has been generated since my 'offending' article (Doyle, 1987). First of all, many posit a rather fundamental question: should I or anyone perceived to be *within* the movement be *allowed* to question the movement's practices? Bob Burton (Research Officer for the Wilderness Society, Hobart) is one such person. In a recent letter to the 'World Rainforest Report' (June 1992 - six years after the original criticism) he writes:

> The last thing the movement needs is self-appointed individuals or organisations pretending that they alone have a monopoly on wisdom (Burton, 1992: 'Letters')

Geoff Holloway shares similar sentiments with Burton. In personal correspondence with the author he states:

> But this doesn't explain why you have chosen to mobilise the information, giving it some sense of legitimacy from your self-proclaimed position of 'objectivity' and 'critic-in-exile' (Holloway to Doyle, 15/10/87)

But is it not the non-governmental professionals who believe that they have a monopoly on the truth? Nowhere in my original critique was their mention of my belief that it was only I who had access to the 'holy grail'. Certainly, I do assert my right to express an opinion; but it is only an informed opinion.

There must be a continued role for critique within this vast and profoundly important living, social movement. The social critic/activist within social movements has a right to question. To question practices is not based - as Burton and Holloway suggest - on the critic's perception of his/her own 'monopoly of wisdom'. Instead, to question, to criticise, and to be active, are simply to be recognised as fundamental to sustaining *social change*.

Apart from this rather widespread intolerance of the critical theorist/activist's role in movement affairs, other common arguments surfaced again and again in both the private and public domain correspondence relating to my critique.

Some of these examples will ring many bells for movement participants, because they have been said so many times that they have almost become movement myths, or truths. These arguments are ***general***, aimed at the role of critique itself, and can be utilised often, regardless of the actual substance or content of the criticism. Five of these arguments against critique are listed below.

1. The World is Burning: Let's get on with the job!

Much environmental work is built around the notion of severely limited time. This type of argument is based on the assumption that the environmental crisis looms large over our heads. With each breath we take, Armageddon draws nearer. I am not going to debate the ultimate truth of the existence of an environmental crisis. At the very least, it is a very useful myth to readjust our ways of living on this planet (for a discussion of the development of political

mythology and the ecological crisis see Doyle, 1990). But the myth (or working, temporary truth) cannot be inflated beyond all proportion to justify the refusal to listen to (and to develop) critique within the social movement.

Much has been written about the impact on decisions in sub-cultures which perceive themselves to be constantly overshadowed and constrained by the ogre *Time*. In a most interesting work concentrating on the decision to launch the ill-fated space shuttle Challenger in January 1986, Moorhead et al. emphasise the importance of this notion. They write:

> Time, as an important element in this model (Groupthink), is relatively straightforward. When a decision must be made within a very short time frame, pressure on members to agree, to avoid time-consuming arguments and reports from outside experts, and to self-sensor themselves may increase. These pressures inevitably cause group members to seek agreement (Moorhead, Ference and Neck, 1988: 547).

Most Western cultures are driven to conform to models of behaviour which operate out of a fundamental notion of the scarcity of time. Time is often used as a factor on the *efficiency/effectiveness* axis which, in turn, is central to concepts of profit maximisation. Due to the dominance of such a view, many exciting and long-term initiatives are never even reviewed by mainstream decision-makers. Society remains locked into incremental, short-term activity. Surely, the environmental crisis can only be averted if we break out of these preconceived and powerful notions of severely limited time. The *crisis factor* has replaced the *profit factor* within many parts of the movement, imposing extreme limitations on social behaviour. We must still have time to dream and to communicate elements of these dreams, regardless of an impending crisis; and regardless if these dreams are at odds with the *day-time* world of the professional movement bureaucrats.

Much of this paranoia about time is expressed in terms such as: 'While your sitting there contemplating your navel, we're getting *on with the job*. Again I quote Burton's arguments against the existence of my critique - although from a different source - as evidence of this mentality.

> Such a beat-up is not in keeping with your paper's (*Times on Sunday*) unquestionable history of good investigative journalism... but we will just get on with the job of campaigning for the protection of Australia's wilderness (Burton, 1987: 14).

Similar positions were taken by Greenpeace eco-crats in their arguments against Hazel Notion's critique of their operations included

in the same edition of *Chain Reaction* which housed my article (*Chain Reaction*, 63/64). Lynette Thorstensen and Alastair Harris write:

> Meanwhile, there's a planet to save and, despite the best efforts of the Parbos, Walshes and, it seems, the 'Notions', we at Greenpeace intend to continue working hard and effectively to this end (Thorstensen and Harris, 1992: 4).

Again, this perspective separates ideas from actions. The argument proceeds, 'While your thinking and talking, we're *doing*. Peter Hay describes this phenomenon within parts of the movement with a tongue-in-cheek attempt at classification of movement *types*. He describes the *bookburner* as follows:

> There it was noted that there is an impatience with and some contempt for theorising on the part of the committed environmental activist. In some this becomes a thoroughgoing deification of 'doing', which has, as its flip side, a deep hostility to the world of ideas (Hay, P., 1986: 254).

Apart from the *crisis factor*, available time is also reduced by the short-term time horizon which defines bureaucracies rather than the usually longer term dimensions of social movements. With the increased power of the professional elite, time frameworks have begun to be defined by other similar structures and modes of operation established at a governmental level. During 1987 - before the Federal election - I wrote to Michael Rae, then the Co-ordinator of The Wilderness Society's Melbourne Branch. Rae was genuinely concerned by the increased power of a small group of people in the movement; but these issues could not be taken up as electoral timelines had begun to dominate ACF/TWS initiatives. He wrote back to me stating:

> ...that of the "executive decision making process", I do not deny that such a thing exists. I have my own concerns about this but I will have to take this issue up in a future letter. My apologies but I am not able to write about this at the moment due to the pressures of time and the fact that elections are screaming around my head (Rae, M., 1987).

Apart from bureaucratic perceptions of limited time determining that critique is not an *efficient* use of this scarce resource, much *human maltreatment* is justified in similar fashion. Too often, justifications of non-consultative decision-making, or poor working conditions are made on these grounds. In one rather irate letter - which I received from an Australian Conservation Foundation professional working in Brisbane during the time of the original article's airing - this position is summed up quite nicely. It reads:

> Both TWS and ACF may have some way to go in broadening and improving their decision-making process...It may not be treating humans as well as it should but it sure is getting some whales saved along the way (Bond, D., 1987: 3).

I, for one, do not wish to live in an *Ecotopia* where *people* are not consulted; where they are represented falsely; where they are deceived; and where they are simply not *valued*.

2. Criticism is like dirty linen: one should only launder it in private.

> A fair and accurate critique of the campaign, discussing positive and negative points, outlining ways to improve in the future, for distribution amongst conservation groups could also be considered a worthy action. The action taken by Tim Doyle and the resulting *Times on Sunday* article of 18/10/87 has, I believe, done only bad for the movement (Wishart, F. (ACF Brisbane) to Doyle, T., 24/10/87).

> While it is vital that the environment movement discusses differences in tactics and strategies for achieving our goals, this also demands a maturity which avoids such debate, degenerating into petty internecine rivalry. Unfortunately, Doyle's article sets a standard of and attacks on individuals that should be strenuously discouraged (Burton, B., 1992).

There can be no doubt that there are differences between *types* of critique. Some is founded on malice and psychic violence and is intended to hurt rather than to challenge established practices. I would argue that there is no place for the latter in the journals, newsletter and magazines of the most powerful, formal organisations in the Australian Environment Movement. But too often confusion occurs, and the latter type of critique is not distinguished from the former by these organisations in their arguments for widespread censorship of such viewpoints. Another unintended consequence is that well-meaning critique eventually becomes slightly barbed due to the frustration at not getting a fair hearing. It is simply not possible, in spite of Wishart's suggestion, to access a vehicle for criticism in these organisations due to the dominance of bureaucratic power.

The practices of the Australian Conservation Foundation are an excellent example. During the Directorship of the ACF by Dr Geoff Mosley, the organisation was far more open to critique. Indeed Mosley saw this as an integral part of the development of the ACF. The filing system used by the ACF did not separate the public domain material from the private correspondence of the organisation. A researcher would normally have access to all of this material. With the appointment of Philip Toyne - beginning a new era of professional bureaucratic power in the ACF - files were almost

immediately made off-limits. Criticism of ACF practices by its members also became a thing of the past.

Habitat has no capacity for the incorporation of a critique or questioning of ACF's practices. Admittedly it is a glossy sales magazine with content sometimes verging on dogma; but unfortunately, it tries to portray itself (and the ACF Newsletter) as an access point for members.

On three occasions I have written critical articles for *Habitat* whilst an ACF member. All three articles were accepted for publication. The first 'Antarctica and the Science of Exploitation' (June 1985) was published. It was a piece of critique; but the focus of the questioning was aimed at Government practices, not the movement's. On the other two occasions discuss of two issues - the Antarctica and Lindeman Island Campaigns - were accepted, but at the last minute were withdrawn. In the instance of the article 'The Antarctic Treaty: Within and Without' (1986), it was removed due to objections raised by the ACF's Antarctic Action Group (of which I was a member), whose practices were the focus of some critique in the article. I wrote to the Editor at that time - John Messer - expressing my concerns.

> When Geoff (Mosley) offered criticism for my original argument it helped me a great deal. I was elated that the ACF was capable of publishing criticism about some of its own practices. I still have hope that this will take place. I don't really know why Chris's (ACF Antarctic Action Group) notes were sent to me. The whole purpose of my article was to get discussion going *publicly*. Perhaps some of Chris' criticisms, coupled with some creative arguments, can be used as a follow-up article: 'In Defence of the Antarctic Treaty?' The extent and passion of this criticism is understandable to me, as my paper questions a current, well-entrenched, and uniform practice amongst conservationists (Doyle to Messer, 13/4/86).

The article, though galley-proofed was never published.

In the third instance - 'Lindeman Island: A Case-Study of Conservative Mobilisation' (1988) - the Lindeman Island campaign was described, emphasising aspects of the campaign fought by local organisations in Queensland. Again, in the photo collection phase, the article was finally rejected; with the then very apologetic editor muttering something about 'I've had a directive from the top'. After these two most recent experiences I have not sought to publish in *Habitat* again.

Both of these articles were subsequently published; but in journals perceived by movement organisation workers as *outside* the

movement, in more academic circles. The point is that attempts were made to discuss operational issues within the organisational movement; but there was simply *no scope* to do this.

In the case of the offending article on the 1987 Federal Election, many attempts were made to publish the material in *movement* journals. *The Ecologist* was initially targeted. After an original le explaining that the material 'looks extremely interesting' (Goldsmith to Doyle 21/9/87) the decision not to publish came a year later without any justifiable explanation. During this period it was not 'etiquette' to offer the article to another journal so, in the interim, a version of my article was published by the *Times on Sunday*. This was probably a mistake, although I felt an urgency to get the debate on record in Australia due to the fact that the issues desperately needed discussing.

The *Times on Sunday* treated the material very poorly, *contextualising* it by asking their staff journalists to rewrite it, using the basis of my original story. *Chain Reaction* writes of this process of getting to print:

> The journalist contacted the organisations concerned and wrote the story. The individual members of the environmental elite denied the implications of the analysis. One year later, evidence supporting Doyle's contention of massive corporate donations to environmental organisations was published in *The Eye*, and later in *the Australian*. The article was then printed in *Journal of Philosophy and Social Action* in 1990, and has been edited by *Chain Reaction* (*Chain Reaction*, 1991: 28).

Four and a half years later the article was published in some form in an *environment* journal. To *Chain Reaction's* credit, it was willing to touch upon some of the *sacred cows* currently existing in the movement, with the publication of its 'corruption' issue (1991: 63/64). It was an event of mixed emotions for me: relief that my arguments were now in circulation in the movement; and sadness that it had taken so long.

The point must be stressed, therefore, that there are few outlets within the movement for the publication of critique. Interestingly, when dissent does manage to get published in a 'movement journal', it is often viewed with contempt and outrage. Often the journal itself distances itself from the critical content of its pages in the form of a disclaimer; or worse, it actually apologises for including the material in the first place. After the World Rainforest Report's initial reporting of my story on the Green Elite, it only took a letter from TWS'

Research Officer, Bob Burton, to retract their support of my material. The editor of WRR wrote:

> WRR apologises for appearing to "accept as fact" the allegations made by Doyle and acknowledges that publication of the story was counter-productive (Editor, WRR, June 1992).

I wrote to WRR to express my surprise and disappointment at their response. In part, the letter reads:

> If Bob Burton was disappointed with your reporting of my article, 'The Green Elite and the 1987 Federal Election' I was similarly disappointed with your editor's comment that 'publication of the story was counter productive'.

Ever since elements of the story were published in 1987, Bob Burton has consistently opposed my arguments. This is fair enough, considering he is research officer of one of the organisations which was the focus of some of my critique. But I think denials of fact made by an organisational bureaucrat about the organisation he/she is working in should be viewed with a healthy skepticism. Certainly, Burton's perceptions of the issues at hand should not be regarded as more 'truthful' than my own arguments and statements (Doyle, T.J. to WRR 10/9/92: 1).

Surely valid critique cannot be ignored simply on the basis of denials from those who are, in part, the focus of critique.

The idea that there are *legitimate* avenues to question organisational practices within the movement is a furphy. Also, returning to the words of Wishart and Burton (listed at the outset of this section), there is much emphasis on *maturity* and *fair and accurate* debate. The notion is that there is some kind of rational *balance* to be struck between *positive* and *negative* characteristics of certain strategies. Unfortunately these notions of *balance* are used all too often to justify and legitimate the status quo and, in this case, the bureaucratic position. *Balance* itself cannot automatically be equated with 'objectivity', or 'no ascertainable bias'. *Balance* - a central facet of 'professionalism' in news journalism - has far-reaching social and political consequences. Baker writes:

> ...that by operating balance within a given structure television tacitly maintained the existing social order within the terms of its prevailing definition. As well, it offered implicitly a favourable image of the system as one 'open to conflict' and to alternate 'points of view'...this approach creates a false symmetry of issues whereby all controversial issues must have two sides, each of which are roughly given equal weight (Baker, L., 1980: 181).

The fact is that balance is not the truth, merely one kind of scientific framework of knowledge. Critique aimed at questioning fundaments of society cannot often be accommodated in such a limiting and conservative means of processing information. In short, there is a place for arguments which declare vehemently and passionately their support of alternate models without having to be based on a belief in the ultimate, repeatable truth of these idea clusters.

3. The Myth of the Media Face

> ...but how does exposing the movement to the vilification of the media ... by unsubstantiated allegations help the movement??? (Holloway to Doyle, 15/10/87: 1)

This general argument *against* movement critique is also very common and is linked closely to the previous argument type. The notion is tha the mainstream media image of the social movement is extremely important. By offering critique of the movement - so this line of thought goes - ammunition is given to reporters to portray the movement as factionalised and inefficient and, because of these characteristics, not *politically viable*.

There are two fundamental problems with this dominant belief. First, the media is at once a perpetuator and a reflector of dominant social political forms. In a pluralist system the mainstream media are also pluralist in their interpretation of events. This model of society fails to accommodate the mechanics and structure of social movements. It is now well-documented that social movements are not lobby groups or defined factional interest groups with tangible boundaries. Rather, they are amorphous. The movement includes not just people from formal organisations but all ideas associated with it. These ideas can exist in part or in total in people's minds (Doyle, 1992b: 54). The pluralist *kaleidoscope*, or way of seeing, however, is based firmly in interest group theory, with each human collective form having clear boundaries which gain power through unification and compromise. To 'give the media what they want', therefore, confuses movement activities. Too much time is spent trying to falsely construct an hierarchical and unified response. Notions such as factions and inner conflict should not be denied; but rather explained as essential elements of *living* social movements. By maintaining 'the media face' movement initiatives are shaped accordingly and, in the process, they are symbolicly distorted and restricted.

Next, by being continually concerned about 'what the media thinks' what *sells* becomes important; not the dissemination of information 'conducive to the wide ranging public debate of policy' (Ward and Cook, 1992: 5). There is often an hidden loss in the human experience

when managed media images become all important. A good example of this point occurred during the environmentalists' campaign to halt the construction of the Cape Tribulation Road at Daintree. At the first blockade (Nov 1983 - Jan 1984), arguments for saving the forest revolved around five criteria: beauty, spiritual, wilderness, survival and aboriginal land rights (Doyle, 1992c: 5 - 6). These arguments were a spontaneous expression of what the people at the protest *actually wanted*. After the first blockade was wound up, the more formal, powerful environment organisations (e.g. The Australian Conservation Foundation, The Wilderness Society etc.) became more heavily involved in the campaign to save 'The Wet Tropics'. These organisations employed public relations and marketing companies (such as Quantum Market Research) to develop new arguments to be utilised as 'strategic tools'. By the time of the second blockade, in August 1984, previous arguments of beauty and wilderness were replaced by those pertaining to scientific and economic (tourism) value.

Herein lies a critical point. Somewhere along the way in trying to make the issue more *appealing* to the media's perception of 'th public', the initial reasons for fighting the campaign are forgotten, overshadowed by slick arguments, not reflecting the people; but reflecting the conservative, reformist, capitalist values of the media's image makers (Doyle 1992c: 5 - 6). It is because of th's that critique is devalued. A fear prevails which stultifies and self-censors; an all-pervading concern about what the media will *think* dominates. Forgotten is the fact that the media is an information tool; not an end point in itself. Means become ends, as so often happens when the bureaucratic way of seeing begins to dominate social movements.

4. You are the enemy

> I do not understand how anyone who has embraced the environment movement in the past, can back-stab it so enthusiastically, indeed maliciously, and for what? (Wishart, F. to Doyle, 24/10/87: 1)

> Kangaroo took his place before the fire again, but looked aside.
> 'Of course you understand,' he began in a muffled voice, 'that it must be one thing or the other. Either you are with me, and I *feel* you with me: or you cease to exist for me' (Lawrence, D.H., 1989: 241).

To 'question' in our society is seen too often as proof that the individual/group which poses the questions is *the enemy*. It is a world where there are only *two sides*. So, if you are not one-hundred per cent with us, then you are against us, as D.H. Lawrence's discussion between Kangaroo and Richard Somers intimates. This pluralistic, oppositional view, as previously mentioned, dominates our thought processes and structures most human interactions.

It is these false dichotomies which haunt the bureaucratic world-view of the movement's organisational elite; often resulting in a false dualism which *separates* the human world into an 'us and them' mentality. So then there appears to be 'goodies versus baddies'; or 'environmentalists versus the forces of darkness' (Thorstensen and Harris, Greenpeace Australia, 1992: 4).

This oppositional view sees the movement as one large organisation with the bureaucratic elites heading the organisation. In the elites' eyes, some activity is seen as *productive* and some is clearly seen as *counter-productive*. This is the very basis for the World Rainforest Report's assertions that my article on the 'Green Elite' was 'counter-productive'. I wrote to the WWR questioning their use of the term:

> I'd like to know on what basis this claim was made. It may have been counter-productive to a small group of professional bureaucrats who did not like the critical limelight. But, on the other hand, I believe it was very productive on a movement-wide basis. Questions such as corporate sponsorship, electoralism, unrepresentativeness are often viewed as 'sacred cows' within some formal organisations who are just one part of a massive social movement. I would argue that if the environment movement wishes to remain a *living* social movement then it must be able to accommodate some critique of its practices; not just labelling such critique from a bureaucratic perspective as *counter-productive* or emanating from *the enemy within.* Indeed, when critique ceases to be tolerated, then often social movements cease to exist and begin to behave as formal organisations (Doyle to WWF: 10/9/92).

The fact is that symbols such as *good* and *bad* ; *environmental* and *developmental* exist in us all. To overcome the widely perceived environmental crisis I would imagine that it might be a good idea to stop thinking in these dualist, over-simplistic definitions of human political conflict and activity. A social movement is not just a large formal organisation, regardless of what the professional bureaucrats believe.

Whilst on the subject of dualisms, I must state here that I believe the current, dominant perceptions of the environmental crisis as a *paradigmatic* conflict is reflective of these over-simplistic dichotomies. Thomas Kuhn's model of scientific knowledge has become so dominant that it now constitutes a *paradigmatic* view of the construction of knowledge in its own right (Kuhn 1969). In his defence, I would argue that this is the last thing he intended to do.

The strengths of Kuhn's argument lie in his introduction of sociology into the philosophy of science debate. First of all, scholars are judged by their 'masters' who usually belong to a previous generation of

thinkers. New knowledge is limited to what will fit into the parameters of the masters' minds. For if it cannot comfortably be inserted within these boundaries, then it will be disregarded on often subjective bases, in spite of it being relabelled in a way which seems 'objective'.

A negative factor in Kuhn's argument is that paradigms are seen as constellations of beliefs and values which provide overly hard and fast boundaries separating the revolutionary from the traditional. Again, conflict is portrayed as oppositional; between the old and the new. The point is that revolution is not synonymous with opposition. Its key source of power may lie in its ability to be diffuse. Too many environmental issues are seen in the context of *opposing* paradigms between development and environment. There have even been more recent attempts to provide a paradigmatic division between the *light green* and the *dark green* within the movement itself (Beder, 1991: 53). Contrary to these oppositional and paradigmatic views, it may be that shades of green exist in all of us, in varying intensities, hues and quantities.

This elite has forgotten the origins of the movement, whose amorphous, ambiguous and paradoxical protests often manifested themselves in sometimes invisible strands; circling, engulfing, drifting like ether through the cracks and groans of post-industrial society. Or, as Chris Rootes puts it, '...that social and political change is more often the product of the many pin-pricks of unco-ordinated protests than it is the deliberate achievement of a self-conscious social movement... (Rootes, 1987: 3).

But even more central to explaining this widespread perception of the *critic* as *enemy* is the *fear* of conflict in our society. Conflict is viewed as *unnatural* in our society. Paradoxically, conflict is seen to lurk at the very roots of our existence waiting to strike with evil intent whenever *authority* is caught napping. As the great conservative novelists of the British Empire have told us - writers such as Golding and Conrad - without authority and established law and order, society will flounder to the whims of its instincts: the nature of the beast; the law of the jungle. Humanity is not born innocent; it is merely made relatively harmonious by institutional arrangements sought, measured and enforced throughout the mists of English time (Doyle, 1992d: 18).

Regardless of which of the major parties rules Australian society, our society is a profoundly conservative one; with tenets of conservatism maintaining a steel grasp on our imagination. Within this conservative view, Government is viewed as essential due to anti-

social conduct found in everyone. If genuine conflict, or dissent is tolerated then civilisation is in danger of being overtaken by its most base forces: the spontaneous evil of humanity. Put simply, conflict is inherently seen as *bad* in a normative sense, and unquestioned togetherness and uniformity are seen as *good*. Critique, therefore, being based on conflict of sorts, is also seen as *bad*.

It has only been quite recent that some social scientists have investigated the possibility of internal conflict being not only a social norm; but quite a necessary and fruitful characteristic of human development. In the anarchist tradition, Janet Bujra abides by these recent trends when she contends that it is largely dominant, hierarchical structures - whilst demanding homogeneity of ideas - which ultimately inhibit a much wider achievement of goals. She writes:

> For the early functionalists, the assumption was that social unity was the normal state of affairs, whereas conflict was a problematic situation which could not easily be incorporated into their theoretical frameworks. More recent studies of political behaviour, however, seem to indicate that it is the conflict which is the norm, and it is the existence of social unity which is the more difficult to explain (Bujra, J., 1973: 133 - 152).

For all of these reasons critique is seen as being *oppositional*, instead of *part of* the social movement.

5. You will be <u>used</u> by the enemy

> ...have you seriously considered the possibility that you are being manipulated/set up by people with political or personal grudges against TWS?....As I mentioned in our phone conversation, you have now produced a series of articles ...(that) all run 'close to the wind' in that they reveal information about the movement that could be used by protagonists to the detriment of the movement (Holloway to Doyle, 15/10/87: 2).

Holloway's fear that my article may be used by *the enemy* is not unique. It is a common theme in the modern environment movement. For example, in Greenpeace's reply to Hazel Notion's critique of that organisation's practices (Notion, 1991), her arguments were discounted on the basis that even if they were not actually produced by 'Arvi Parbo' (Thorstensen and Harris, 1991: 4) or 'a right wing think tank like the Institute of Public Affairs' (Gilding, 1991: 3) then they still could be mobilised against Greenpeace by the *enemy*. Thorstensen and Harris of Greenpeace Australia write:

> Ultimately, it's disappointing to be attacked on the basis of a lot of rumour-mongering and assertion...those very activities of which the

> 'forces of darkness' accuse all of the environment movement, and the very activities we should take absolute care to avoid (Thorstensen and Harris, 1991: 4).

Even when certain criticisms are seen as *legitimate* by movement members, there are moves to censor these on the grounds that they may be *used by the enemy*. This type of general argument is not as severe on the critic as the previous 'You *are* the enemy' argument, as it gives the critic the benefit of the doubt as to his/her motives. The critic is now regarded as 'truthful'; but misguided in his/her knowledge of the strategic usefulness/dangerousness of the critique to the movement's enemies.

First of all, this argument presupposes the existence of an enemy which has just been discussed. Without this perceived enemy, this argument loses its premise. For the sake of debate, however, it might be useful to accept the notion of *the enemy*, for this type of argument is also flawed in its conclusion.

There can be no doubt that all manner of people utilise information in ways which suit them and others. Information is a knowledge resource which offers individuals and various human collective forms power (Smith, R., 1989: 14 - 25). All sorts of people used aspects of the article on the *Green Elites* in different ways. Some picked particular arguments; some used case-study material; some contextualised the article; some re-interpreted it; some mis-interpreted it; and some bastardised it.

Some of the ways in which the material was used were agreeable to me; and some of the ways it was used disturbed me. In a positive vein, it was used by people who saw me arguing a *movement* perspective; an argument highlighting the changes in environmentalism brought about by a new dominant grouping: the professional, bureaucratic elite. In summary, *good* things emerged from this process.

On the other hand, the material was also used by many in a myriad of ways which I could never have possibly dreamed of. In 1987, when the material was first aired, I received congratulations from both anarchists and the ultra-right wing think-tank and propaganda unit 'the Hope Foundation'. The anarchists saw my article as adding weight to the theory of the inevitable and ultimate corruption of *organisation* per se.

The 'Hope Foundation' used my name and article in a way to give 'objective' substance to their conspiracy theory (Hope Foundation, Recording of Public Meeting: 1988). This theory stated that a small

group of Jewish bankers had ceased control of the World Bank. By using World Heritage Legislation they were taking Australian territory away from Australians, and gradually they would take over the world. The Wilderness Society and ACF were part of this conspiracy. The Hope Foundation's agenda included the election of Bjelke-Petersen for Prime Minister.

In 1991, when the material was re-released by *Chain Reaction*, different persons and groups used the information to their advantage. The Democratic Socialist Party used the material as a way of attacking the burgeoning Green Party, which now enjoys much support from the professional elite. In turn, Jo Valentine (Green Party Senator) sought to ascertain whether or not *Chain Reaction* had been taken over by the DSP.

Over the six years since the material has been released it has been used by many to push their particular, secular barrows. In different eras, literature is reinterpreted to give meaning to the *now*, even though it had been written in the *then*. The critic/activist cannot always control the ways in which his/her writings will be used. Once in the public domain - where it must be! - it becomes the property of others; to bend; to reshape and to re-interpret.

Although the above use of my material verges on the humorous, more 'mainstream' environmental organisations - TWS and ACF - also interpreted my article as a conspiracy theory. On three separate occasions, they publicly ridiculed my article on the basis that it was a 'conspiracy theory' or the theory of 'the fifth column'. These public statements read:

> Tim Doyle is welcome to his conspiracy theories about the conservation movement (Burton, B., TWS, 25/10/87: 14)
>
> Tim Doyle's theory of infiltration by an ALP fifth-column elite is fantasy (Wooten, J.H., President ACF, 1/11/87: 12).
>
> Much of Tim's conspiracy theory seems based on the fact that I had worked briefly for Environment Minister Barry Cohen before becoming TWS Director (West, J., Ex-Director TWS, 1991: 6).

This relabelling of my article as constituting 'conspiracy theories' occurred despite the fact that my arguments were not remotely based on 'conspiracy'. In the article, I went to some lengths to stress the fact that one 'does not have to be a conspiratorialist' (Doyle, 1991: 28) to understand events leading up to the election. The importance of Jon West's dual role was stressed; but to emphasise the importance of individual relationships is hardly tantamount to a conspiracy.

Also on this point, regardless of Wooten's interpretation, I did not stress direct, instrumental relationships between the ALP and the group of professional elites. Again I quote directly from the article: 'There is no evidence which suggests that the ALP has deliberately infiltrated the movement' (Doyle 1991: 29), and 'Some members of the elite network had ALP membership. But this is not the crucial factor in explanation of the ALP-Movement link.' Instead, I emphasised the role of network politics wherein Labor bureaucrats and environment organisation bureaucrats worked together. Most important of all was the fact that the ALP was in Government at the time, and members of the professional elite concentrated on direct lobbying techniques which brought them closer to *Government* rather than the ALP per se. In becoming closer to *Government* - whichever party it is - often structural constraints reshape the politics of social movements.

I wrote to the Editors of *Chain Reaction* to further explain this point in response to West's letter (Doyle to *Chain Reaction*, 11/5/92: 2):

> The use of the term 'conspiracy theory' was also used in the initial official' response from The Wilderness Society in *the Times on Sunday* back in 1987. It seems quite fashionable these days to discredit or ridicule certain political opinions by calling them 'conspiracy theories'. Quite to the contrary to forming a conspiracy, the people involved in the professional elite had insufficient time, organisation, or resources to detail in advance a comprehensive blue-print for action which a conspiracy would necessitate. Indeed, my very point in the article was that so dominated were they by electoral politics that little opportunity lay open to them for anything more than incremental, knee-jerk responses and decisions (Doyle to the Editors, *Chain Reaction*, 11/5/92: 2).

The popularity of conspiracy theories may be a result of the professional, bureaucratic elite's current dominance in the organised movement. Bureaucracies, by their very nature, are depersonalised. They are built on the myths of meritocracy, with each person fulfilling the role of an interchangeable part in a machine (Weber, 1958: 214). They are the *reification* of the human: separating the individual from the organisational structure which he/she helped to create. Bureaucracy is built on the fact that individual relationships/networks are corrupt. If there is mention of personal relationships having some power in bureaucracies these are seen as conspiracies: evil and treacherous. Such far less deliberate, structural notions of a 'collective, uniform bias' or a 'fragmentation and diversity in the administrative elite' (Page and Painter, 1991: 100 - 102) which may explain this phenomenon are conveniently ignored.

Regardless of what is actually written, words will often be reinterpreted to push a particular view which was never the original writer's intention. This may have as much to do with the often unconscious sub-cultural biases of the information-user - in this case the sub-culture of bureaucracy - as it has to do with a conscious decision to reconstruct the arguments to instrumentally and rationally suit a strategic position.

I am again reminded of D.H. Lawrence's work *Kangaroo*. The main character in this book is Richard Lovatt Somers, a poet and essayist. On arrival in Australia, Somers is approached by both the Socialist Leader Willie Struthers and the Nationalistic/Fascistic Ben Cooley (Kangaroo). Each one feels that they can utilise Somer's belief in the 'absolutely and flatly democratic' nature of Australian society for his/her own benefit. Somers attempts to diffuse both grouping's interests in him by stating: 'But I am tired of one central principle in the world' (Lawrence, 1989: 239). In accepting this fact, Lawrence argues for a 'creative, purposive freedom in a world threatened on the one hand by chaos and on the other by life-denying demands for order and stability' (Southhall, 1989: xii).

Both Struthers and Kangaroo each have a very different, polarised definition of what a real *Australian* is; and each is eager to use Somer's arguments to provide strength to his definition; a definition carefully constructed to gain support. Somers is not interested in adopting a polarised, sectionalised definition of *Australia* or social reality. He rejects Struthers and Kangaroo on these grounds. He is eclectic and relational in his view of the world; and in this sense, he is honest to *himself*, and to all of society, as he sees it. He *questions* always. Paradoxically, the critic/activist, in being honest to his/her self-perceptions of reality; in speaking about society/movements in non-oppositional, non-sectional terms, will always be used by partisans of all descriptions. For, quite simply, the critic has questioned *both sides* (in reality, the many sides) and *both sides* will use the differing and appropriate parts of the information to denigrate the other. This is not the fault of the critic (nor an argument to stop questioning); rather the fault of a society which perceives itself as oppositional; which sees the necessity to discover Kangaroo's or Struther's definition of the *real Australia*; or, in this case *the real environment movement*.

This does not deny that fact that the critic/activist pushes a position for strategic purposes. All arguments have elements of the strategic. The critic/activist seeks notional *truths*; but comes from a position based on value judgements, like anyone. But strategic concerns do not always have to be purely sectarian, nor do they have to

dominate. Perhaps the critic seeks a *multi-cultural* environment movement? Or, more simply, when will we rediscover the joy of using arguments as accurate modes of expression and not simply as strategic *tools?*

Of course in seeking the multi-cultural, the many faceted, power is diffused and cannot be mobilised as succinctly as it can be in a more *defined* society or formal organisation. The bureaucracy is scared of the critic because he/she diffuses power and argues for the dispersed nature of the social movement. Again the bureaucratic mode must not be used to downgrade the role of the critic; or other non-bureaucratised types of social action.

In accepting that many of the ways in which critique is used is out of the critic's control, this cannot be interpreted as an argument which removes all responsibility from the shoulders of the movement critic. There are appropriate times when things should be said, and times when things should be left unsaid. The critic must attempt to be fair and honest, rather than pursuing notion of value-free objectivity.

Conclusion

This paper has concentrated on general arguments which can be used (and have been used) interchangeably by movement participants to discount and discredit the value of the dissenter or the critic within the movement. There are also numerous *specific* arguments which were used in the context of my 'Green Elites' article, attempting to downgrade the importance of my claims. There is no space here to analyse these in a detailed fashion; but some questioned, for example, my motives from all angles. Others argued that elite rule was *inevitable*, a bit like war, so why not just lay back and work within the boundaries of these perceived inevitabilities. Finally, some argued that the majority of the movement were not interested in these issues so why, therefore, was I?

There are strong arguments which can be utilised to justify the maintenance of the social movement model. The environmental crisis is ever-changing. A social movement which is flexible, diverse and amorphous can accommodate for these changes. There is also room for formal organisations like ACF and TWS, and there is also room for green political parties; but their usefulness stops when they perceive themselves the *centre* or *core* of the movement, and not just one very useful part. In more recent times, powerful formal organisations have actually perceived and portrayed themselves as *the* environment movement.

It is important to remember that there are tangible benefits of critique in the environment movement in the short-term, as well as the long. For example, I would suggest that my 'Green Elites' article raised the debate on certain important and *taboo* issues in the movement and this, in turn, has been quite effective as a beginning point for discussion and change. Since I initially wrote the article there has been, I believe, improvements in ACF/TWS electoral practices (remembering in 1987 the ACF did not bother to poll its members on the all-important question of whether they wanted to back a political party), and discussion has focussed on TWS practices. Some have been amended to emphasise participative decision-making and to protect the organisation from the seizure of its mechanisms by a small band of people (MacGregor et al., 1988: 1 - 17).

I do not suggest that I am totally responsible for these changes; but perhaps my critique provided a focus for people and got them talking about some operational issues which they had previously felt uncomfortable about? Perhaps these criticisms have helped, in some small way, to instigate changes within these powerful organisations? The critic often sets him/herself up as a person of straw. The critic's debate is seen as *extreme*, and often this opens the gate for what is perceived as more 'balanced debate'. In short, it becomes easier and more respectable for activists to discuss these issues post-critique.

Most importantly - and an appropriate note to end this paper - we must remember that it is dissent which is the norm, and conformity which is the stranger. Brian Martin writes:

> Suppression of dissent is a worldwide phenomenon, and is most commonly exercised against political dissidents. Overt suppression is the exception: suppression of dissent works most effectively when it is self-imposed (Martin, B., 1992: 11).

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Why Kropotkin Advised Radcliffe-Brown As He Did

K. Maddock

In an earlier article (Red & Black, no 22) I discussed the question of Peter Kropotkin's acquaintanceship with the anthropologist A.R.Radcliffe-Brown, who is said to have accepted anarchism as a young man around the turn of the century. Although the evidence is not very great we can be reasonably sure that they met in Bromley, that Kropotkin would have been receptive to an obscure student, and that certain of Radcliffe-Brown's attitudes were akin to Kropotkin's even after he decided that anarchy was more than we could hope for. Radcliffe-Brown was highly individualistic. While this does not imply any particular political opinion it is certainly consistent with anarchistic or libertarian socialist leanings.

Since doing that article I have received some new evidence which may seem trivial but is, in my opinion, quite significant. I wrote to M.N.Srinivas, the Indian anthropologist who studied under Radcliffe-Brown at Oxford after World War Two and who is one of our two published sources on the meeting with Kropotkin, to see whether he could add anything to his account. Srinivas recalled that Radcliffe-Brown told him "that he used to 'play' with Kropotkin's daughter, Natasha." Actually her diminutive was Sasha, but the error is small and understandable.

Alexandra Kropotkin (named after her father's favourite brother Alexander, who had taken his own life in 1886 in the hopelessness of political exile in Siberia) was an only child. Born in 1887---and thus six years younger than Radcliffe-Brown---she would have been between fifteen and seventeen when he was meeting her father, at least if we assume, as is likely, that they met between 1902 and 1904. George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic describe her as having been "an attractive, lively and from all accounts flirtatious girl" around that period.(1) Srinivas was surprised by this information, because he had assumed that Sasha "was a very young girl" at the time, i.e. a mere child. Perhaps her "play" with young Brown was flirting.

The significance of this fragment is not only that it puts it beyond reasonable doubt that Radcliffe-Brown met Kropotkin. It strongly suggests that he must have called on the Kropotkins several times at least. Discussions with the father of the kind described by Srinivas (2) and play

or flirtation with the daughter would have been a lot to fit in to a single visit.

My aim in this article is to consider what guidance Radcliffe-Brown may have received from Kropotkin, whether on the visits or through reading, and why Kropotkin would have given the advice or exerted the directing influence that he apparently did. As Radcliffe-Brown never mentioned Kropotkin in print it is necessary to look at latter's life and writings in the hope of discovering a reflection in the former. Richard Perry, who wrote on their relation, seems not to have known that the two men met.(3)

In my earlier article I quoted what Srinivas and Meyer Fortes said about Kropotkin's advice. Radcliffe-Brown, who was full of ideas for social reform, was urged to study society before trying to change it, and to begin with simpler forms of society before tackling the more complex. It can certainly be said that he took the advice, for he became an anthropologist and made his name with research among the Andaman Islanders and the Australian Aborigines. His publications, like his actual fieldwork, were mainly about the simpler or primitive societies. But why would the revolutionary Kropotkin have given such advice? And why would young Brown have sought him out?

To take the second question first, Kropotkin would have been extremly well known in England by 1902 (the earliest at which Radcliffe-Brown is likely to have met him). He had applied his anarchist philosophy to scientific questions in Mutual Aid (1902) and Fields, Factories and Workshops (1899). Modern Science and Anarchism was to come out in 1903. He had written grippingly about his adventurous and astonishingly varied life in Memoirs of a Revolutionist (1899) and In Russian and French Prisons (1887). He contributed to leading journals such as Nature and The Nineteenth Century. All this in addition to his widely circulated anarchist pamphlets and his lecturing work for the cause. Anyone interested in anarchism would have known of him and found it easy to follow his ideas and how he proposed to apply them. They would also have found it easy to see how his ideas were expressed through his life.

Fortes has said that it was while holidaying in Kent (the county in which Bromley is situated) that Radcliffe-Brown met Kropotkin, but we do not know how the meeting came about or why things developed as they did; in fact we do not even know if Brown had yet acquired his Cambridge nickname "Anarchy". We do know that as a Birmingham schoolboy in late 1890s he was keen on natural history. This interest would have provided an obvious link to Kropotkin quite apart from any political affinities.

As to why Kropotkin gave his advice, the answers can be found I think by considering his career. Kropotkin would have been about sixty at the time, Radcliffe-Brown about twenty. My guess is that Kropotkin's new acquaintance would have reminded him quite powerfully of himself when young. To see why this was so it is necessary to look back to the 1860s. In 1862 Kropotkin completed his education at the Corps of Pages, an elite military school in St Petersburg. Because of his brilliant record he spent his final year as page de chambre to the Tsar and could have taken a commission in any of the best-known and most fashionable regiments. Instead he chose to join an obscure Cossack regiment stationed in eastern Siberia, a decision which reflected his disillusion with the system. He was already imbued with an ardent desire for the reform of Imperial Russia, though he was not yet an anarchist or even a socialist.

Reform ideas, initially encouraged by the Tsar, had waned in European Russia but still enjoyed support at high levels of the administration in parts of Siberia. Kropotkin quickly became involved in this work and prepared reports on prisons and on municipal self-government. In opting for Siberia he had been inspired by the belief that it offered "an immense field for the application of the great reforms which have been made or are coming".(4) His five years there gave him "a genuine education in life and human charcter".(5) In particular, they:

> ...taught me many lessons which I could hardly have learned elsewhere. I soon realized the absolute impossibility of doing anything really useful for the mass of the people by means of the administrative machinery. With this illusion I parted forever.(6)

He wished "that all framers of plans of state discipline would pass through the school of real life before they begin to frame their state Utopias"---if they did, much less would be heard "of schemes of military and pyramidal organization of society".(7)

It was not only a sense of the self-defeating absurdity of reform from above that he acquired. His Siberian years also gave this young aristocrat and army officer, this one-time personal attendant on the Tsar, an appreciation of human society that was wildly at variance with everything that his upbringing and family background would have instilled. Kropotkin:

> ...began to understand not only men and human

> character, but also the inner springs of the life of human society. The constructive work of the unknown masses, which so seldom finds any mention in books, and the importance of that constructive work in the growth of forms of society, fully appeared before my eyes. To witness, for instance, the ways in which the communities of Dukhobortsy...migrated to the Amur region, to see the immense advantages which they got from their semi-communistic brotherly organization, and to realize what a wonderful success their colonization was, amidst all the failures of state colonization, was learning something which cannot be learned from books. Again, to live with natives, to see at work all the complex forms of social organization which they have elaborated far away from the influence of any civilization, was, as it were, to store up floods of light which illuminated my subsequent reading.(8)

He did not deny that individuals were needed to take the initiative,but once the impulse had been given communal methods and common understanding were all important, not command and discipline.(9)

So when Brown turned up with his "panaceas for what he regarded as the ills of contemporary England" he must have awakened a reminiscent strain in Kropotkin. It should be no surprise that the old Russian advised the Englishman "to pay special attention to the simpler societies", as Fortes recalled (10), or that, as Srinivas recalls:

> Kropotkin pointed out to the young reformer that it was necessary to st and understand society before trying to change it and that in order to understand such a complex society as Victorian England one should begin by making a systematic study of a faraway primitive society.(11)

In 1906 Brown set off for the Andaman Islands, in 1910 for Western Australia. The extent, if any,to which these journeys into remoteness were affected by Kropotkin's advice is unknown, but we can be sure that they would have enjoyed his strong approval.

An objection could be raised against my argument. It might be said that after leaving Siberia Kropotkin became ever more deeply involved in politics, culminating in his conversion to anarchism in 1872 as a result of living among the Jura watchmakers during his first visit to Western Europe. Between 1867 and 1872 he embarked on scientific

studies and research capitalizing on his remarkable journeys of exploration while in Siberia. It is obvious that he could have led a distinguished career in geology and geography. But in 1871 or thereabouts he underwent a crisis.

Kropotkin was engrossed in scientific inquiry:

> There are not many joys in human life equal to the joy of the sudden birth of a generalization, illuminating the mind after a long period of patient research. What has seemed for years so chaotic, so contradictory, and so problematic takes at once its proper position within an harmonious whole.(12)

He is referring here to his theories on the physical geography of Asia. But he was being torn by a realization that these delights were unnecessarily restricted by the organization of society:

> He who has once in his life experienced this joy of scientific creation will never forget it; he will be longing to renew it; and he cannot but feel with pain that this sort of happiness is the lot of so few of us, while so many could also live through it...if scientific methods and leisure were not limited to a handful of men.(13)

By 1871, when offered a prized position for research, he no longer regarded himself as having the right to spend his life in scientific inquiry. What he had seen of peasants in Russia and Finland had convinced him that:

> ...all around me was nothing but misery and struggle for a mouldy bit of bread; that whatsoever I should spend to enable me to live in that world of higher emotions must needs be taken from the very mouths of those who grew the wheat and had not bread enough for their children.(14)

So it was that Kropotkin became a revolutionary instead of a scientist. Might he not have been expected, then, to urge Radcliffe-Brown to take up political activity and agitation?

I think that the answer is to be found in the strong revival of Kropotkin's scientific and scholarly interests in the 1890s, which came to fruition in Fields, Factories and Workshops (1899, Mutual Aid (1902), Modern Science and Anarchism (1903), Russian Literature (1905), The Conquest of Bread (1906) and The Great French Revolution (19-

09). He was growing older, his domestic life was rewarding, perhaps he even wondered now and again whether the self-abnegation of 1871 and dedication to heroic struggle and self-sacrifices had been entirely worthwhile.

Whatever might be said by way of personal speculation, it is evident that Kropotkin was now seeing scientific work and its popularization as activities which could go hand-in-hand with social struggle. Mutual Aid is an outstanding example. Himself a Darwinian, Kropotkin attacked Social Darwinism as a travesty of the theory of evolution, as a debasement and falsification leading to erroneous and inhuman politics.

The expression "mutual aid" occurs here and there in Radcliffe-Brown's publications. Unpublished notebooks of his dating from around 1910 show that he was much concerned with questions of solidarity, conflict and oppostion. Kropotkin's name is not mentioned, but as well as sociological writers like Simmel, Durkheim, Hubert and Mauss, Radcliffe-Brown referred to Shaw, Nietzche and Tolstoy. What used to be called "the social question" seems to have been on his mind, at least if we may judge by the writers he was reading.

The most important point here , however, is Kropotkin's own judgement about his work on mutual aid. The term had been used and the idea briefly sketched by a Russian zoologist named Kessler in a lecture in 1880. After becoming acquainted with Kessler's work in 1883 Kropotkin "began to collect materials for further developing the idea."(15) He found that Kessler's insistence on the law of mutual aid, as distinct from the law of a pitiless struggle for existence, was well understood in Russia but ignored by Darwinians in Western Europe. Why this readiness by Russian zoologists to accept mutual aid as a factor in evolution? Kropotkin attributed it to the fact that:

> ...nearly all of them have had opportunities of studying the animal world in the wide uninhabited regions of Northern Asia and East Russia; and it is impossible to study like regions without being brought to the same ideas. I recollect myself the impression produced upon me by the animal world of Siberia when I explored the Vitim regions in the company of so distinguished a zoologist as my friend Polyakoff was. (16)

We need to study animals "in the forest and the prairie, in the steppe and the mountains", and not just in museums and laboratories. (17) It is a plea for observation in the field and for basing one's understanding on what happens

among individuals who live freely and naturally. Is it any wonder, then, that at about the time Mutual Aid appeared Kropotkin should have advised Raddcliffe-Brown to go far away if he wished to begin to understand society? If he were "to live with natives", as Kropotkin did in Siberia in the 1860s, he too would "see at work all the complex forms of social organization which they have elaborated far away from the influence of any civilization".

Radcliffe-Brown's interest in human society was to be dominated by tribal peoples. He never advanced to societies such as Victorian England. Nor did his attempts at understanding lead him to try to change society. He worked his way through only a part of the agenda suggested by Kropotkin. But much that he wrote would, I think, have interested Kropotkin or could even be seen as a working out of a Kropotkinian position, as I hope to show in another article.

NOTES

1 The Anarchist Prince (Boardman, 1950), at p.260
2 See his introduction to Method in Social Anthropology: Selected Essays by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown (University of Chicago Press, 1958), at pp. xviii-xix. Srinivas said that Radcliffe-Brown knew Kropotkin in Birmingham (p. xviii), but he now considers this an error arising from his knowledge that Radcliffe-Brown was associated with that city.
3 See his article on "Radcliffe-Brown and Kropotkin", Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers, 1978
4 Memoirs of a Revolutionist (Houghton, Mifflin, 1899), at p. 155.
5 Memoirs, at p.169.
6 Memoirs, at p.215.
7 Memoirs, at p.217.
8 Memoirs, at pp.215-16.
9 Memoirs, at p.217.
10 See his introduction to Social Structure: Essays Presented to A. R. Radcliffe-Brown (Clarendon Press, 1949), at p. viii.
11 See his introduction to Method in Social Anthropology, at pp. xviii-xix.
12 Memoirs of a Revolutionist, at p. 226
13 Memoirs, at p.227.
14 Memoirs, at p.240.
15 Mutual Aid (Pelican Books, 1939; originally published in 1902), at p.14.
16 Mutual Aid, at p.26.
17 Mutual Aid, at p. 24.

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